

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

X-433

STATIC LONGITUDINAL CHARACTERISTICS OF

SEVERAL PROJECT MERCURY LAUNCH VEHICLES AT MACH NUMBERS

BETWEEN 0.4 AND 6.8

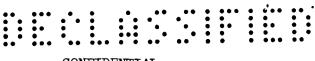
By James D. Church, Albin O. Pearson and Peter T. Bernot

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SUMMARY

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An investigation has been conducted in various wind tunnels at the Langley Research Center to determine the static longitudinal stability characteristics of some Project Mercury booster-capsule configurations. Data were obtained for models of the Little Joe, Redstone-Mercury, and Jupiter-Mercury configurations with the various capsule arrangements suitable to these particular vehicles over a Mach number range of 0.4 to 6.8 and a maximum angle-of-attack range from approximately -14° to 18°. Brief comments on the significance of the model stability data with respect to proposed full-scale flight are presented.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous investigations of the suitability of a Project Mercury capsule as a part of the man-in-space program are being conducted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (See, for example, refs. 1 to 3.) In this connection, the NASA will evaluate the operational concepts, and test some of the actual hardware of this project through the use of various full-scale booster-capsule configurations launched into suborbital trajectories. These flights will be conducted in several stages, that is, simulation of increasingly larger portions of the final exit and reentry trajectories will be attempted as the program advances. Accordingly, tests were conducted in various wind tunnels to determine the static aerodynamic characteristics of various possible launch configurations. The three configurations reported herein are identified as the Little Joe, Redstone-Mercury, and Jupiter-Mercury vehicles.

^{*}Title, Unclassified.

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Evaluation of the stability results requires a knowledge of certain operational features of the various vehicles. For example, the Little Joe configuration incorporates large fins mounted on a canister enclosing a solid-propellant rocket cluster and relies entirely on aerodynamic forces for stability. Both of the other two vehicles employ liquid propellants and either augment stability with jet vanes (Redstone-Mercury) or rely exclusively on gimbaled rockets for stability (Jupiter-Mercury).

Data for the present tests were obtained over a Mach number range of 0.4 to 6.8 in the Langley 8-foot transonic pressure tunnel, the Langley Unitary Plan wind tunnel (4-foot test section), and the Langley 11-inch hypersonic tunnel. The maximum angle-of-attack range of the investigation was from approximately -140 to 180. The significance of the stability results of the various configurations in view of the full-scale requirements is briefly discussed.

SYMBOLS

The basic data are presented as force and moment coefficients referred to the body-axes system shown in figure 1.

| A | maximum cross-sectional area of booster body, $\frac{\pi d^2}{4}$, sq ft |
|---------------------------|---|
| CA | axial-force coefficient, $\frac{\text{Total axial force}}{\text{qA}}$ - $C_{A,b}$ |
| C _{A,b} | base axial-force coefficient, $\frac{\text{Base axial force}}{\text{qA}}$ |
| $C_{\mathbf{m}}$ | pitching-moment coefficient, Pitching moment qAd |
| $c^{m^{\alpha}}$ | pitching-moment curve slope, $\frac{\partial C_m}{\partial \alpha}$, per deg |
| $\mathbf{c}_{\mathbf{N}}$ | normal-force coefficient, $\frac{\text{Normal force}}{\text{qA}}$, per deg |
| $c_{N_{\alpha}}$ | normal-force curve slope, $\frac{\partial C_{N}}{\partial \alpha}$, per deg |
| đ | maximum diameter of booster body, in. |



| M | free-stream Mach number |
|----------------|---|
| p_{t} | free-stream stagnation pressure, lb/sq ft |
| Q | free-stream dynamic pressure, lb/sq ft |
| R | Reynolds number based on d |
| T _t | free-stream stagnation temperature, ^O F |
| X,Y,Z | orthogonal set of body axes |
| x | longitudinal distance forward of booster base measured along body center line, in. |
| x/d | longitudinal distance forward of booster base in diameters |
| ∆(x/d) | effective static margin, distance in diameters that the center of gravity is ahead of the center of pressure, $(x/d)_{cg}$ - $(x/d)_{cp}$ |
| α | angle of attack referred to body center line, deg |
| β | angle of sideslip referred to body center line, deg |
| Subscripts | s: |
| cg | center of gravity |
| ер | center of pressure |
| | |

APPARATUS AND DATA

Wind Tunnels

The investigations were conducted in the Langley 8-foot transonic pressure tunnel (8-foot TPT) at Mach numbers from about 0.40 to 1.20, in the Langley Unitary Plan wind tunnel (4-foot UPWT) at Mach numbers from near 1.70 to 4.65, and in the Langley 11-inch hypersonic tunnel (11-inch HT) at Mach numbers near 6.8.

The 8-foot TPT facility is of the variable-pressure, continuousflow type and has a slotted test section in which the Mach number can

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be varied continuously up to a Mach number of 1.20. Essentially, all data presented from this tunnel are free of wall-reflected disturbances.

The supersonic tests were conducted in both the low and high Mach number test sections of the 4-foot UPWT, which is a variable-pressure, continuous-flow tunnel. The nozzles leading to the test sections are of the asymmetric sliding-block type, which permit a continuous variation in test-section Mach number from approximately 1.5 to 2.9 in the low Mach number test section and from about 2.3 to 4.7 in the high Mach number test section. The dewpoint was controlled in the 8-foot TPT and 4-foot UPWT to maintain an airflow which is free of condensation shocks.

The hypersonic tests were performed in the ll-inch HT. This facility is of the intermittent-operation type and utilizes both a high-pressure tank and a vacuum tank. The tunnel is equipped with a two-dimensional, single-step nozzle which will produce a nominal Mach number of 6.8 at varying stagnation pressures of 5 atmospheres to 37 atmospheres. To avoid liquefaction, a stagnation temperature of about 650° F is maintained for all tests.

Models

Details of the full-scale vehicles are given in figure 2 and photographs of the various wind-tunnel models are shown in figure 3. All of the models were hollow, metal bodies of revolution. The scale sizes of the various models are given in the following table:

| m | Scale sizes for - | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Tunnel | Little Joe | Redstone-Mercury | Jupiter-Mercury | | | | |
| 8-foot TPT 4-foot UPWT 11-inch HT | 0.0750 .0750 .01875 | 0.04645 .04645 | 0.04645 .01714 | | | | |

Small differences existed between the wind-tunnel models and full-scale vehicles, particularly for the Little Joe configuration. For this configuration the 8-foot TPT and 11-inch HT models had 8.3 inches (full scale) removed from the base, as indicated by the dashed line at station 521.1 in figure 2(a). The 8-foot TPT model had a Marman clamp simulated at the juncture of the capsule and booster (fig. 3(a)) and four rocket fairings mounted on the parachute canister. The 4-foot UPWT model also had the Marman clamp attached (fig. 3(a)) and in addition had two small simulated camera pods, spaced 180° apart, on the



capsule and two probes mounted on the nose. The Little Joe models were tested with and without the escape rocket and tower attached (escape and exit configurations).

The Redstone-Mercury model with the escape tower was the same for the 8-foot TPT and 4-foot UPWT tests and differed from the full-size vehicle only in the addition of four small steering rocket fairings on the capsule (fig. 3(c)). The Jupiter-Mercury models without the escape tower were tested in the 4-foot UPWT and 11-inch HT (fig. 3(d)) and were similar to the full-scale vehicle (fig. 2(c)) except that the 11-inch HT model was tested without the stub pylon fairing.

Tests

All the models were sting supported; normal-force, axial-force, and pitching-moment characteristics were determined by means of an internal electrical strain-gage balance. The conditions at which the tests were performed in the various facilities are listed in table I. The base pressures were obtained from a single static-pressure orifice located near the bases of the models. Schlieren photographs were taken at the higher Mach numbers.

Corrections and Accuracy

Angles of attack have been corrected for both tunnel flow angularity and deflection of strain-gage balance and sting support due to aero-dynamic loads. Axial-force coefficients have been corrected to a condition of free-stream static pressure at the base of all models.

Based upon calibration and repeatability of data it is estimated that the various measured quantities are accurate within the following limits:

| M easur e d quantities | | | | | | _ | 8-foot TPT | | 4-foot UPWT | | ll-inch HT | | |
|--|-----|---|--|--|---|---|------------|---|------------------|--------|------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| α, d M . Litt | le | | | | • | | : | • | ±0.6 ±0.30 | ±0.070 | ±0.038 | ±0.018 | ±0.014 |
| C _A C _m Reds | ٠ | | | | | | | • | ±0.06 ±0.06 | - | | | ±0.004 ±0.013 |
| C _N | • | | | | | • | ٠ | | ±0.047 ±0.020 | ±0.022 | | . 02 8 . 00 9 | |
| C _m Jupi C | teı | | | | | | • | • | ±0.029 | ±0.014 | | . 025 | ±0.000 |
| C _N C _M | : | • | | | | | | : | | | ±0. ±0. | ±0.022 ±0.007 ±0.012 | |



PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The pitching-moment coefficients for the various models are referred to the moment-center locations shown in figure 2. The center-of-pressure and center-of-gravity locations are all referred to the bases of the models. For the Little Joe models with the reduced length the center-of-pressure locations are referred to the extended base utilized on the 4-foot UPWT model (full-scale station 529.4, fig. 2(a)).

The results are presented in the following figures:

| Typical schlieren photographs | Figure 4 |
|--|-------------|
| Variation of base axial-force coefficients with Mach | |
| number | 5 |
| Aerodynamic characteristics of: | |
| Little Joe; escape | 6 |
| Little Joe; exit | 7 |
| Redstone-Mercury | 8 |
| Jupiter-Mercury | 9 |
| Summary of aerodynamic characteristics: | |
| Longitudinal; $\alpha \approx 0^{\circ}$ | 10 |
| Effective static margins; $\alpha \approx 0^{\circ}$ | 11 |

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

An investigation of the static longitudinal stability characteristics of some Project Mercury booster-capsule configurations has been conducted over a Mach number range of 0.4 to 6.8. The summary results are presented in figures 10 and 11; as the values of $C_{m_{\alpha}}$ Redstone-Mercury and Jupiter-Mercury have no direct significance, they are not shown in figure 10. A comparison of the various vehicles (fig. 10) indicates that lift and drag were increased, as would be expected, with the addition of booster fins and increases in fin area. In addition, the escape tower slightly decreased the the Little Joe model from M = 1.0 to 2.6; at higher speeds the effect $C_{N_{Cl}}$. However, the most significant results of the was to increase tests are indicated by the effective static margins, $\Delta(x/d)$, shown for each vehicle in figure 11, where the center-of-gravity positions illustrated represent the worst flight conditions anticipated; these results are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Little Joe: This is the only vehicle of the present investigation that relies entirely on aerodynamic forces for stability over its



flight envelope. The data indicate that this vehicle is stable, as required, over the tested speed range and even though the stability decreases with increasing Mach number, $\Delta(x/d)$ is at least 0.3 diameter at the highest speed contemplated (M \approx 5.8).

Redstone-Mercury: The requirements of this test were to determine the speed at which the system becomes neutrally stable; as can be seen, this occurs at about M = 1.9. It is intended to ballast this vehicle (with the minimum additional weight possible) such that the system will be aerodynamically stable to about M = 2.5 in the event of engine failure; with no malfunction, jet vanes provide the required stability over the entire booster trajectory.

Jupiter-Mercury: The purpose of this test was to determine the amount of aerodynamic instability present, since this system relies entirely on thrust vectoring for stability. A maximum value of $\Delta(x/d) = -3$ diameters at $M \approx 1.6$ is believed to be within the servo limits of the existing system (contained in unpublished Army Ballistic Missile Agency data).

Thus, the aerodynamic stability of each of the three vehicles appears to be within the capability of the respective operational systems.

REFERENCES

- 1. Pearson, Albin O.: Wind-Tunnel Investigation at Mach Numbers From 0.50 to 1.14 of the Static Aerodynamic Characteristics of a Model of a Project Mercury Capsule. NASA TM X-292, 1960.
- 2. Shaw, David S., and Turner, Kenneth L.: Wind-Tunnel Investigation of Static Aerodynamic Characteristics of a 1/9-Scale Model of a Project Mercury Capsule at Mach Numbers From 1.60 to 4.65.

 NASA TM X-291, 1960.
- 3. Pearson, Albin O.: Wind-Tunnel Investigation at Mach Numbers From O.40 to 1.20 of the Static Aerodynamic and Control Characteristics of a Model of a Nonlifting Reentry Capsule in Combination With a Rocket Booster. NASA TM X-317, 1960.



TABLE I. - TEST CONDITIONS

(a) Little Joe

| Facility | М | α, deg | pt, psf | T _t , °F | q, psf | R | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 8-foot TPT | 0.40 .60 .80 .90 .95 .98 1.00 1.03 | -6 to 12 | 2,120 2,120 2,120 2,120 2,120 2,120 2,120 2,120 2,120 | 125 125 125 125 125 125 125 125 125 | 210 418 623 710 750 770 783 801 881 | 1.15 × 10 ⁶ 1.57 1.87 1.97 2.00 2.03 2.04 2.04 2.08 | | | | |
| 4-foot UPWT | a _{1.82} b _{2.10} 2.81 3.51 4.65 | -3 to 14 -3 to 14 -9 to 14 -14 to 14 -14 to 14 | 996 1,285 2,575 5,375 13,830 | 125 125 150 150 175 | 389 434 516 599 601 | .86 .98 1.29 1.85 2.59 | | | | |
| ll-inch HT | 6.85 | -2 to 12 | 51,500 | 650 | 475 | .40 | | | | |
| | | (b) R | edstone-Me | rcury | - | | | | | |
| 8-foot TPT | 0.60 .80 .90 .95 .98 1.00 1.03 | -10 to 12 -10 to 12 | 1,880 1,880 1,880 1,880 1,880 1,880 1,880 | 125 125 125 125 125 125 125 125 | 572 553 631 665 683 696 712 781 | 0.75 × 10 ⁶ .90 .95 .96 .97 .98 .98 | | | | |
| 4-foot UPWT | 1.70 2.10 2.51 2.87 | -4 to 17 -4 to 17 -3 to 18 -4 to 17 | 2,455 2,965 3,940 5,325 | 125 125 150 150 | 1,006 1,000 1,001 1,017 | 1.19 1.23 1.25 1.40 | | | | |
| (c) Jupiter-Mercury | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4-foot UPWT | 1.57 2.10 2.51 2.87 | -4 to 14 -3 to 14 -3 to 14 -4 to 12 | 2,355 2,965 3,940 5,265 | 125 125 150 150 | 1,000 1,001 1,001 1,006 | 1.79 × 10 ⁶ 1.84 1.88 2.07 | | | | |
| ll-inch HT | 6.71 | -2 to 13 | 20,850 | 650 | 205 | .19 | | | | |

aExit only.

bEscape only.

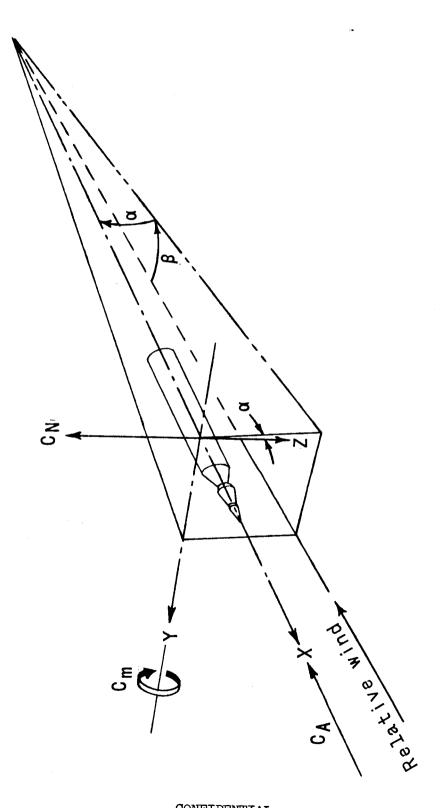
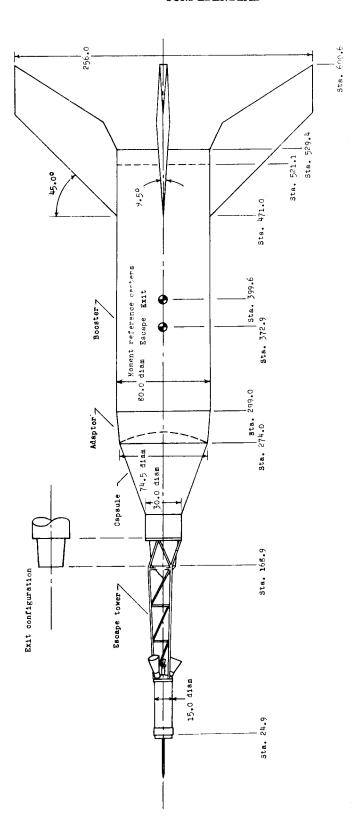
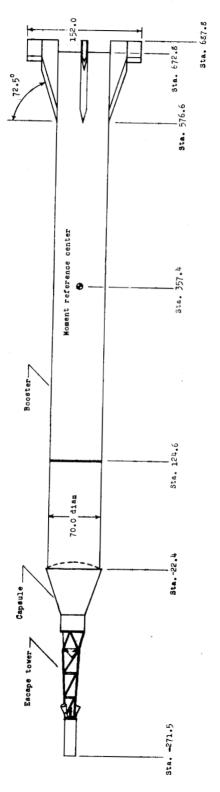


Figure 1.- Body system of axes. Arrows indicate directions of positive forces, moments, and



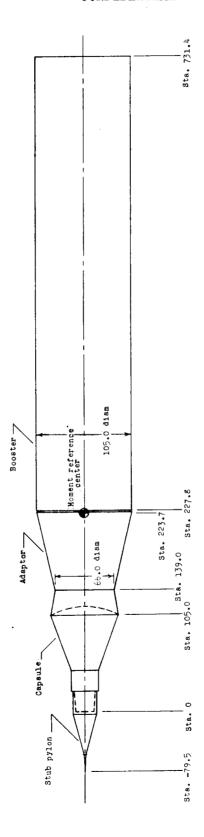
(a) Escape and exit configurations of Little Joe.

Figure 2.- General arrangement of various Project Mercury launch vehicles. All dimensions are in inches.



(b) Redstone-Mercury configuration.

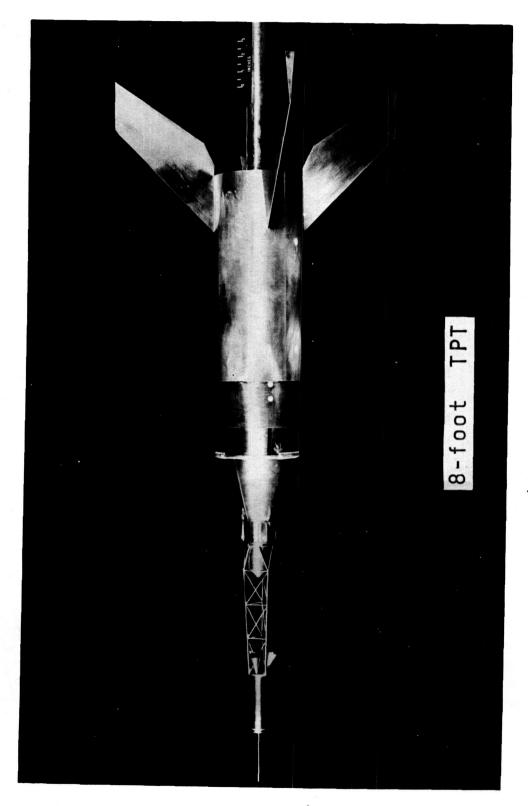
Figure 2.- Continued.



(c) Jupiter-Mercury configuration.

Figure 2.- Concluded.

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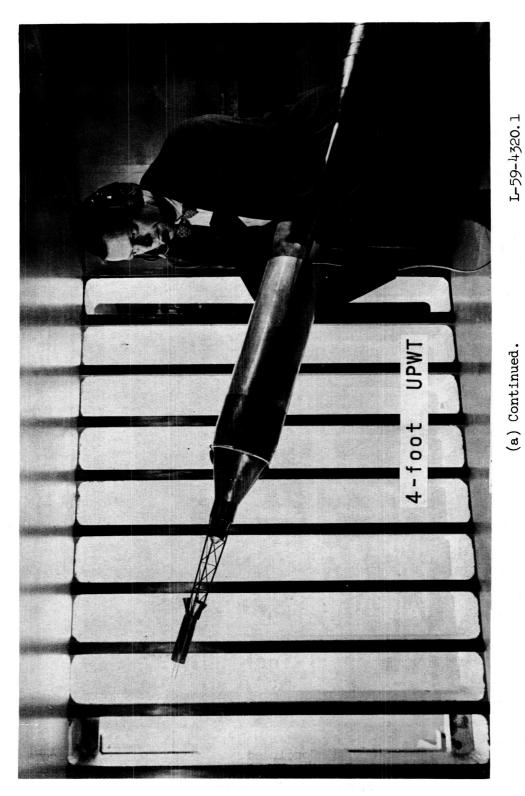
(a) Little Joe; escape.

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Figure 3.- Photographs of models.

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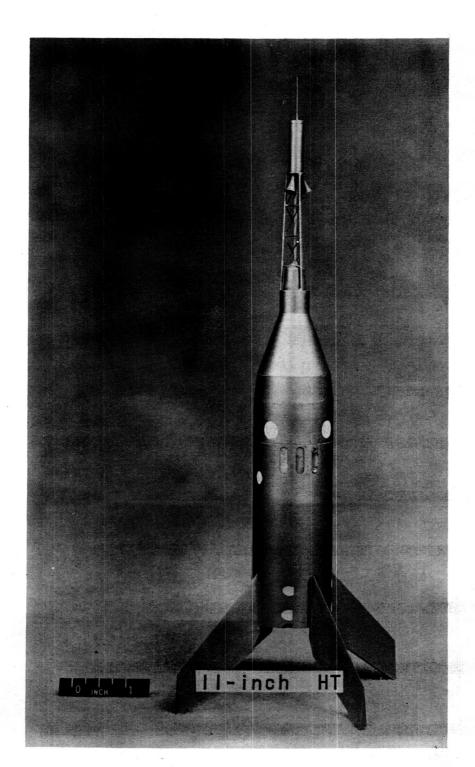
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Figure 3.- Continued.

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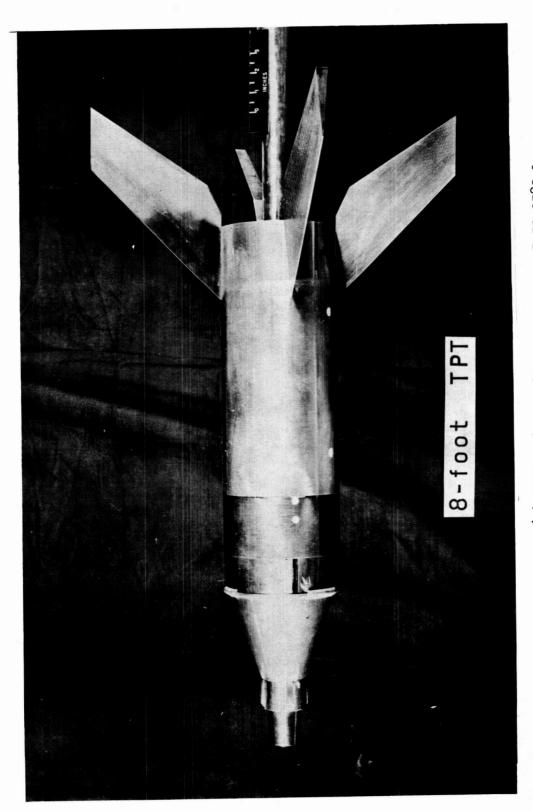


(a) Concluded.

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Figure 3.- Continued.

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(b) Little Joe; exit.

Figure 3.- Continued.

L-59-2389.1

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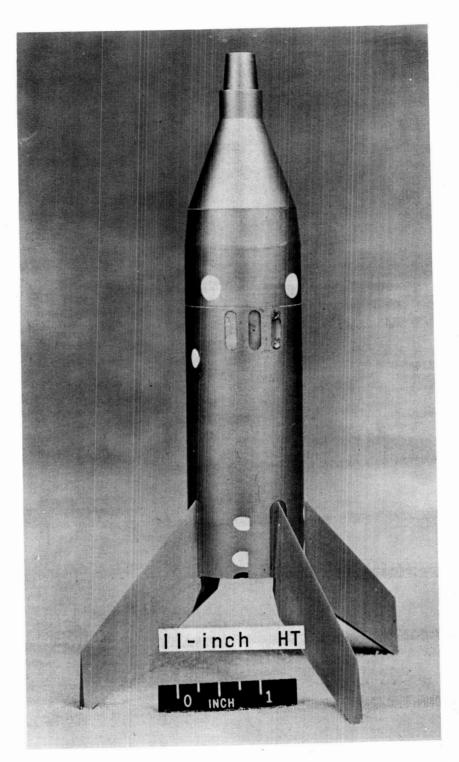


(b) Continued.

Figure 3.- Continued.

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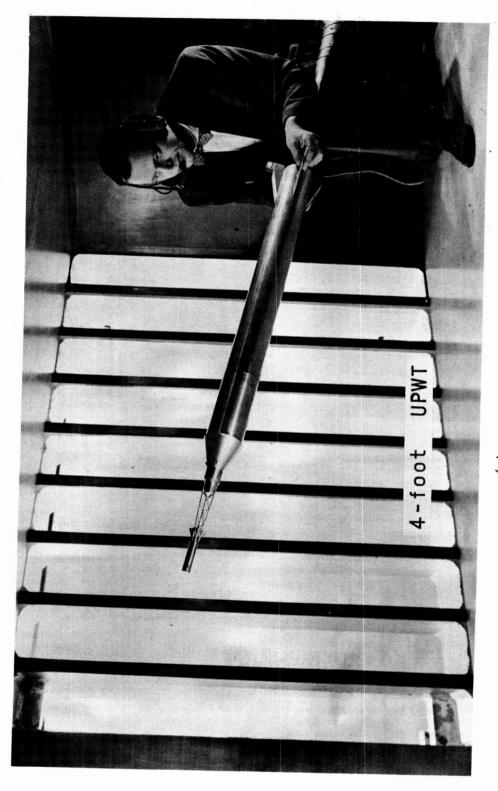


(b) Concluded.

L-59-2976.1

Figure 3.- Continued.

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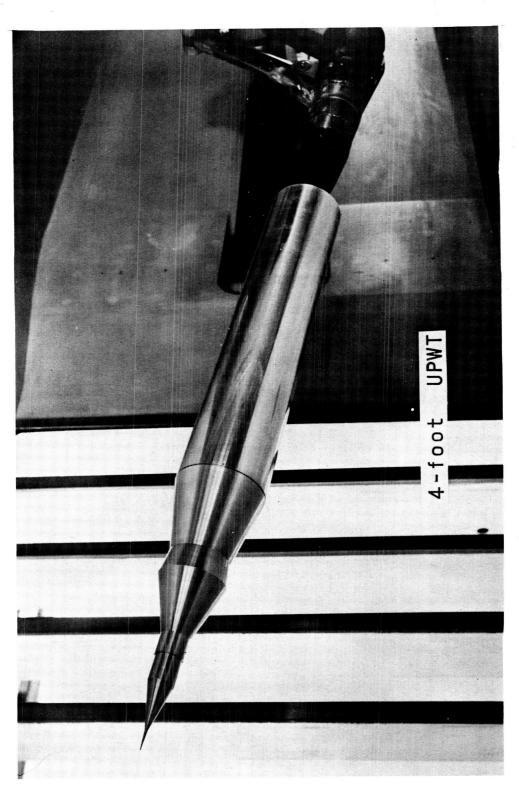
(c) Redstone-Mercury.

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Figure 3.- Continued.

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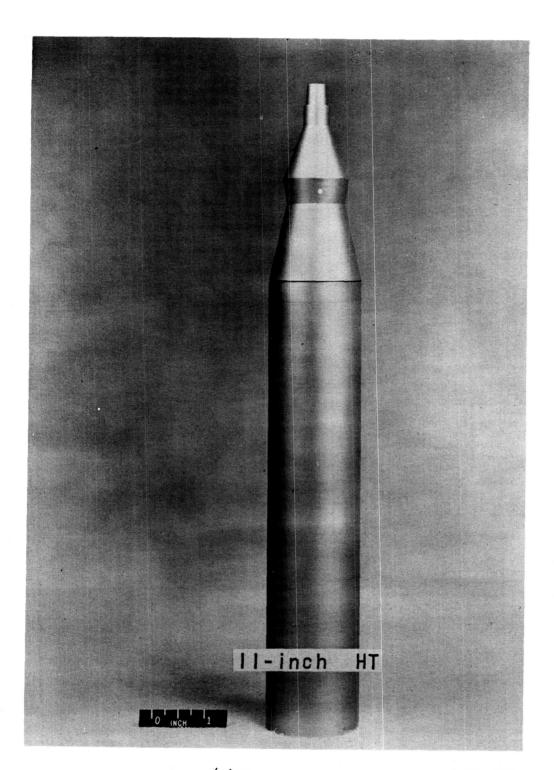
20



(d) Jupiter-Mercury.

1-59-4340.1

Figure 3.- Continued.



(d) Concluded.

L-59-2977.1

Figure 3.- Concluded.

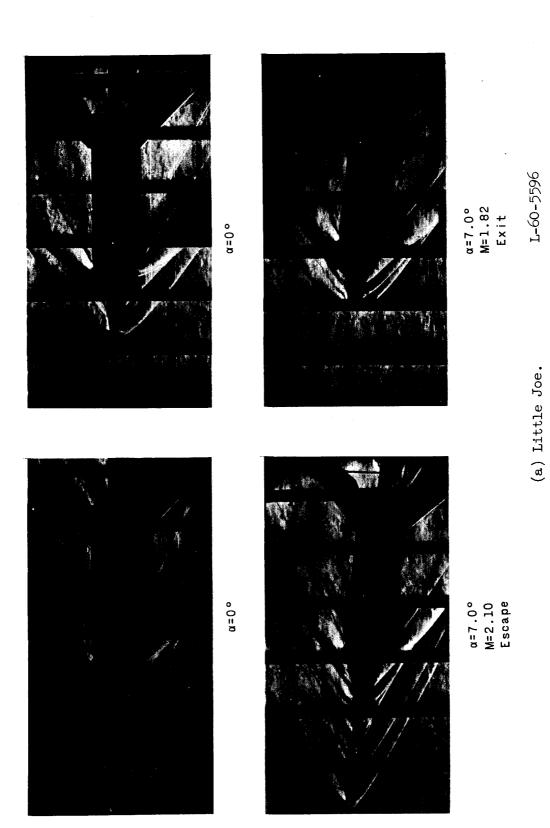
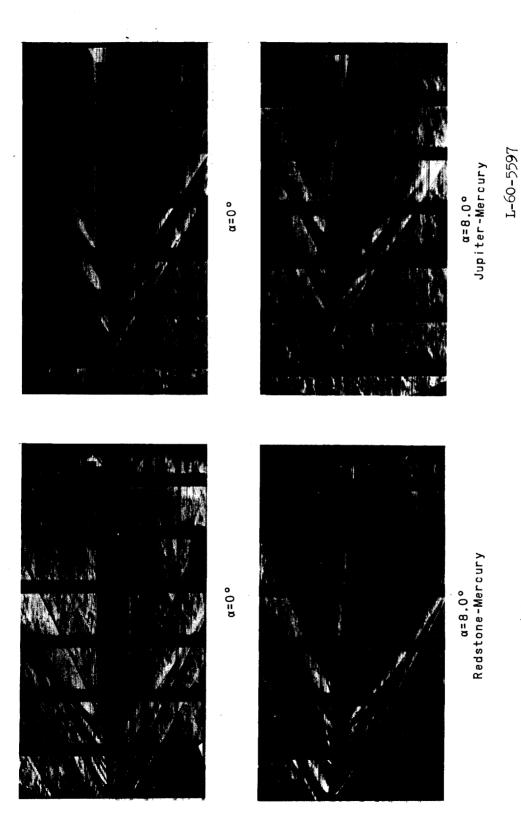


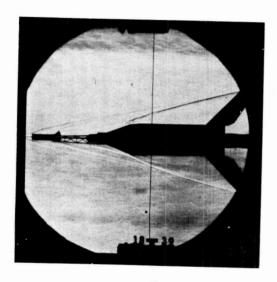
Figure 4.- Typical schlieren photographs.

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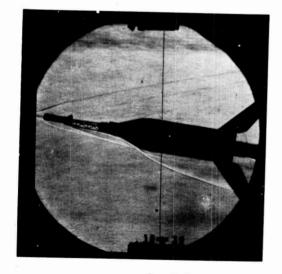


(b) Redstone-Mercury and Jupiter-Mercury; M = 2.10.

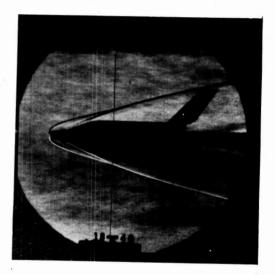
Figure 4.- Continued.



 $\alpha = 0^{\circ}$



α=8.0° Escape



α=0°

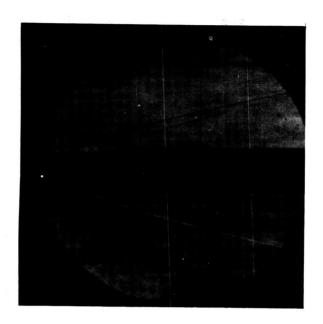


α=8.0° Exit

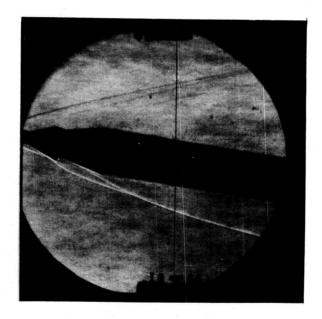
(c) Little Joe; M = 6.8.

Figure 4.- Continued.

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 $\alpha=0.1^{\circ}$



α=8.5°

(d) Jupiter-Mercury; M = 6.7.
Figure 4.- Concluded.

L-60-5599

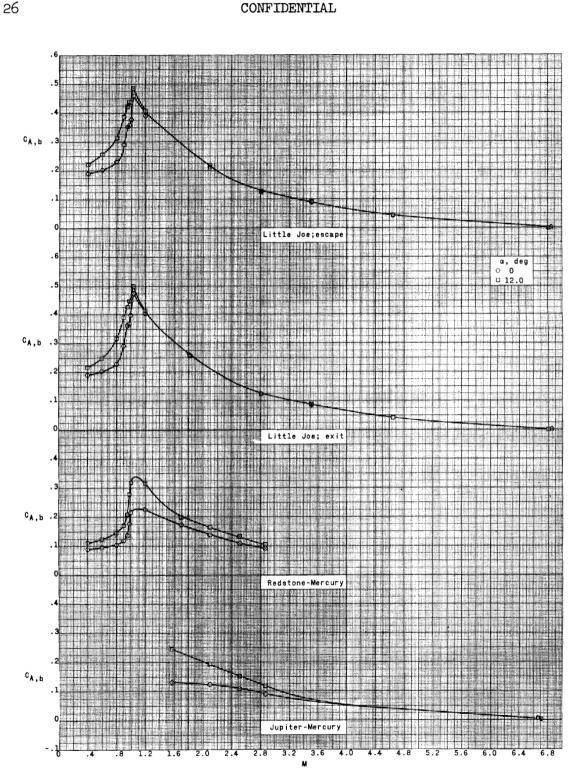
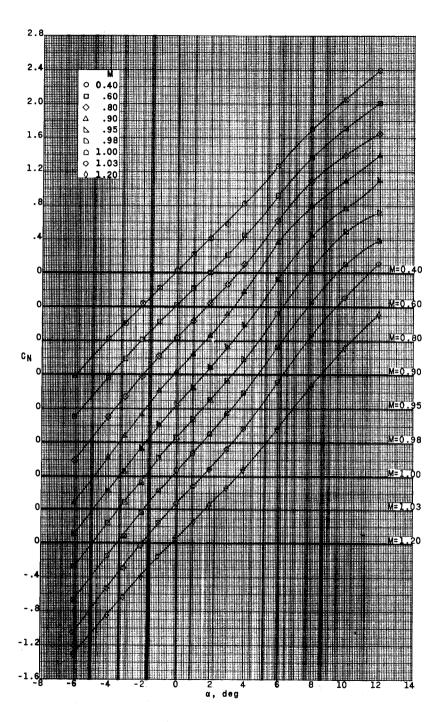


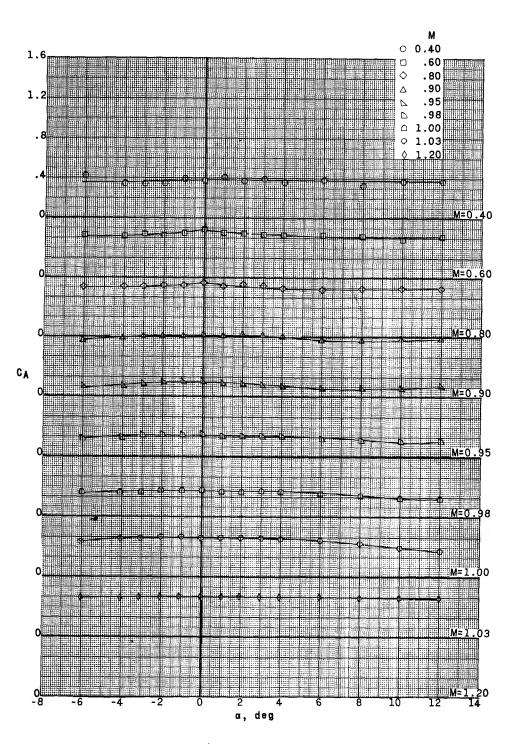
Figure 5.- Variation of base axial-force coefficients with Mach number.





(a) 8-foot TPT.

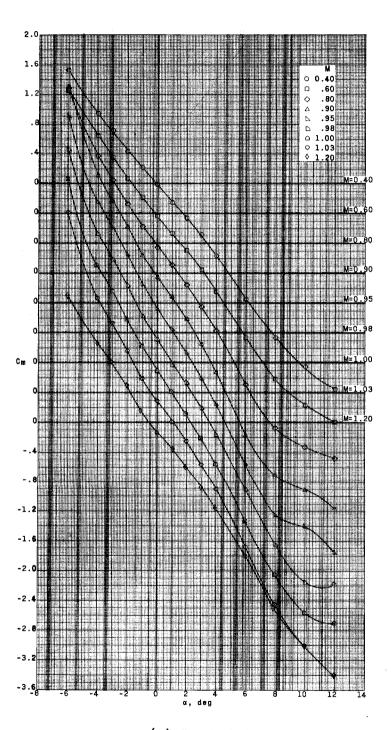
Figure 6.- Aerodynamic characteristics of Little Joe escape configuration. Moment reference center at station 372.4.



(a) Continued.

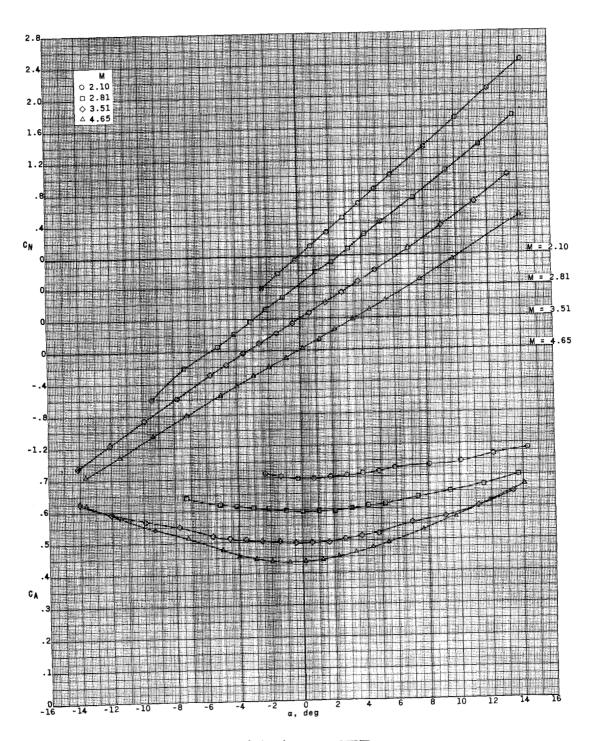
Figure 6.- Continued.





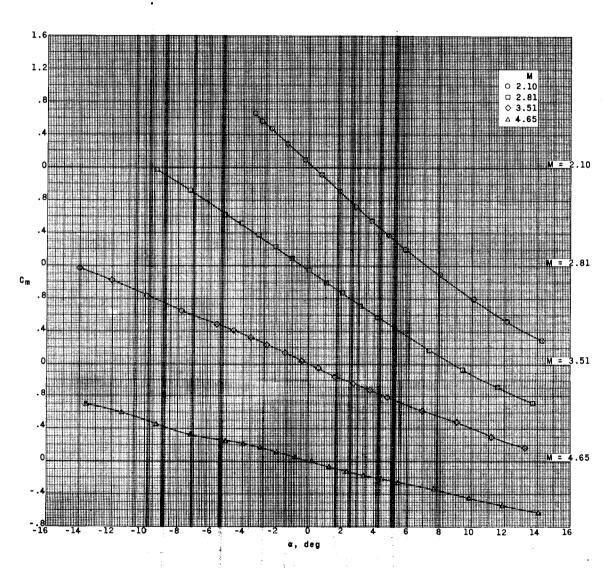
(a) Concluded.

Figure 6.- Continued.



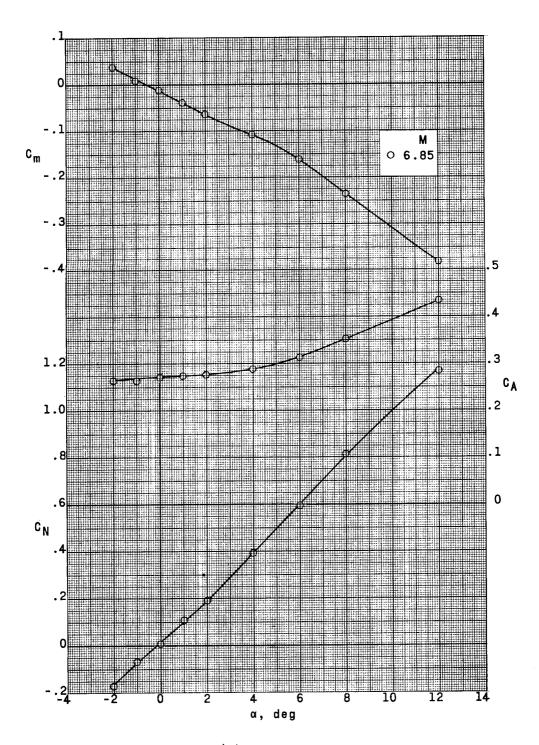
(b) 4-foot UPWT.

Figure 6.- Continued.



(b) Concluded.

Figure 6.- Continued.



(c) 11-inch HT.

Figure 6.- Concluded.

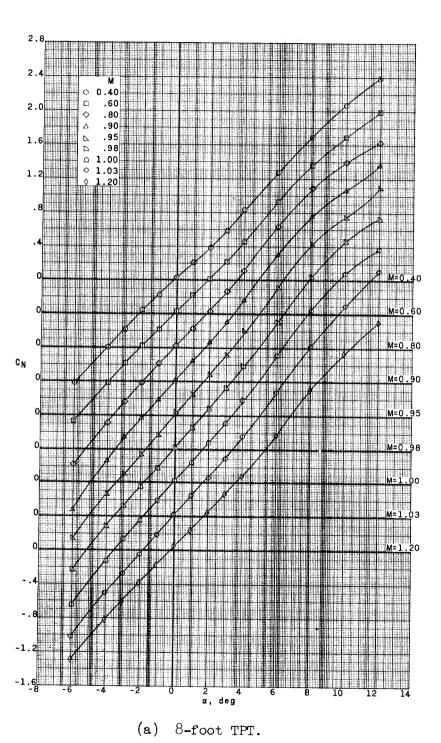
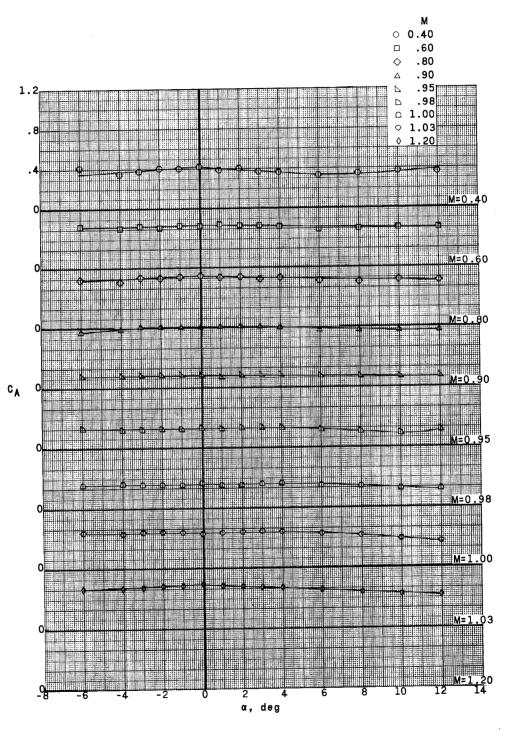


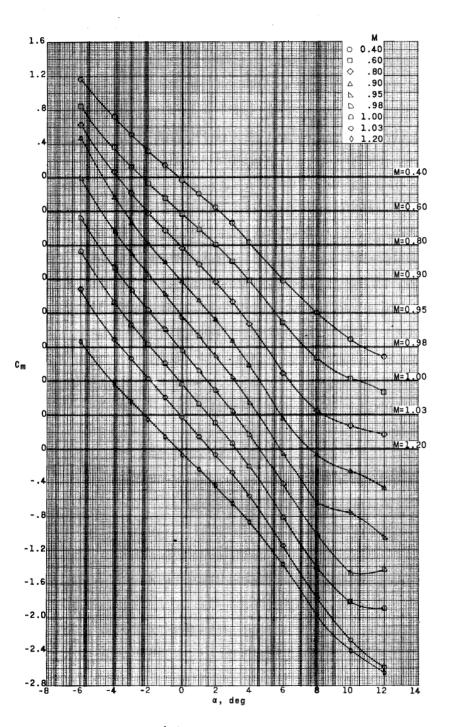
Figure 7.- Aerodynamic characteristics of Little Joe exit configuration.

Moment reference center at station 399.6.



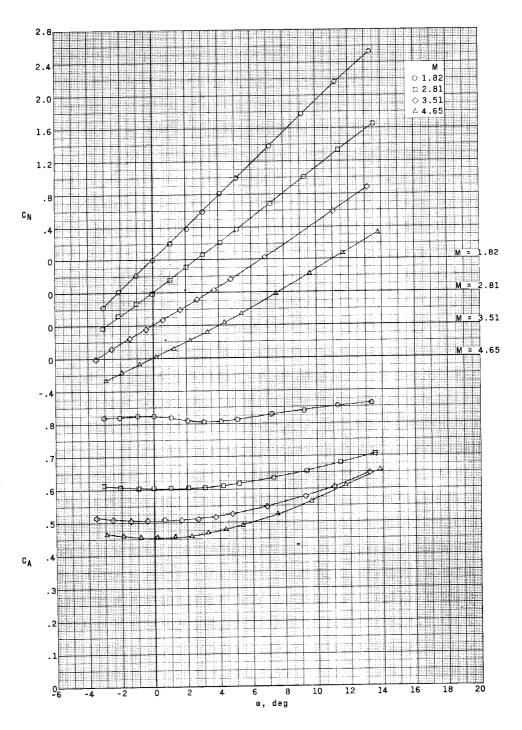
(a) Continued.

Figure 7.- Continued.



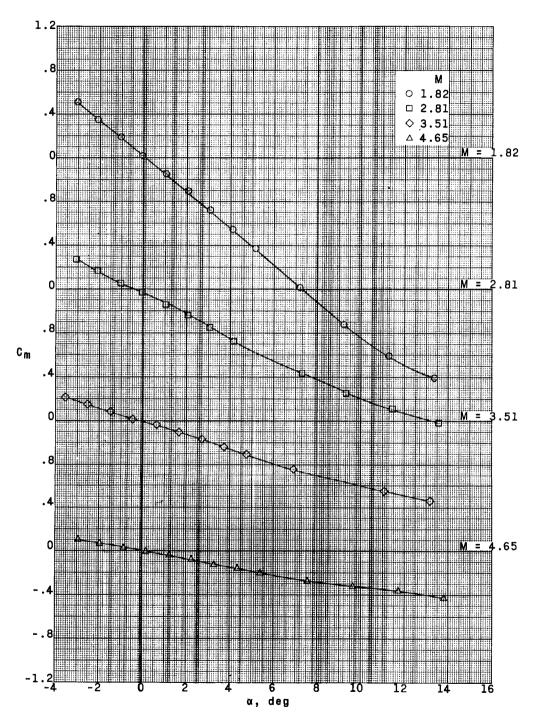
(a) Concluded.

Figure 7.- Continued.



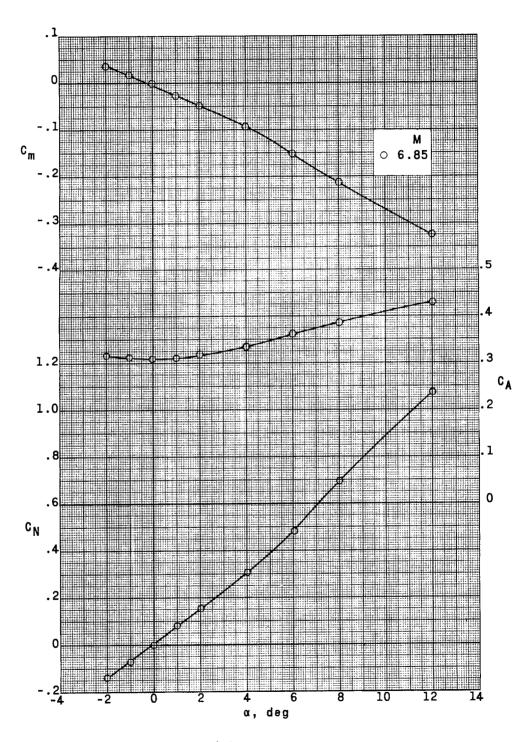
(b) 4-foot UPWI.

Figure 7.- Continued.



(b) Concluded.

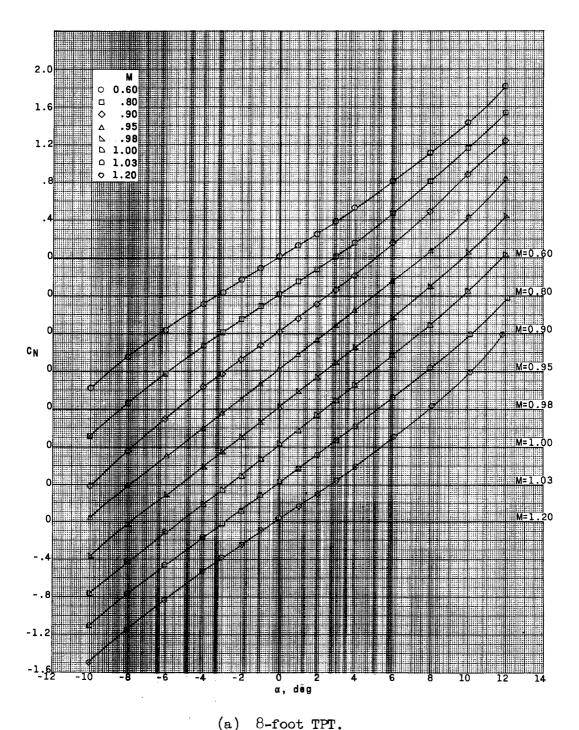
Figure 7.- Continued.



(c) ll-inch HT.

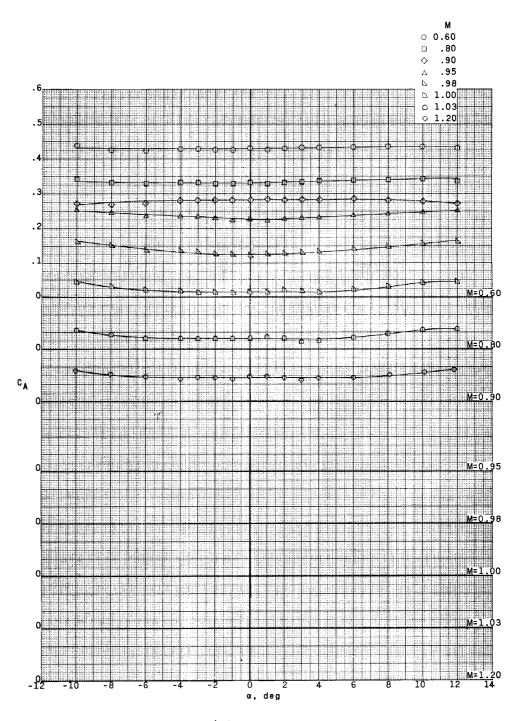
Figure 7.- Concluded.





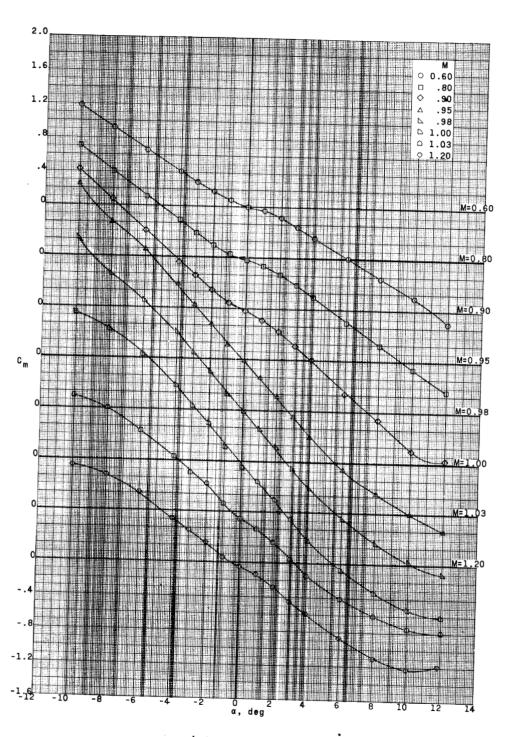
(a) 0-100t 111

Figure 8.- Aerodynamic characteristics of Redstone-Mercury configuration. Moment reference center at station 357.4.



(a) Continued.

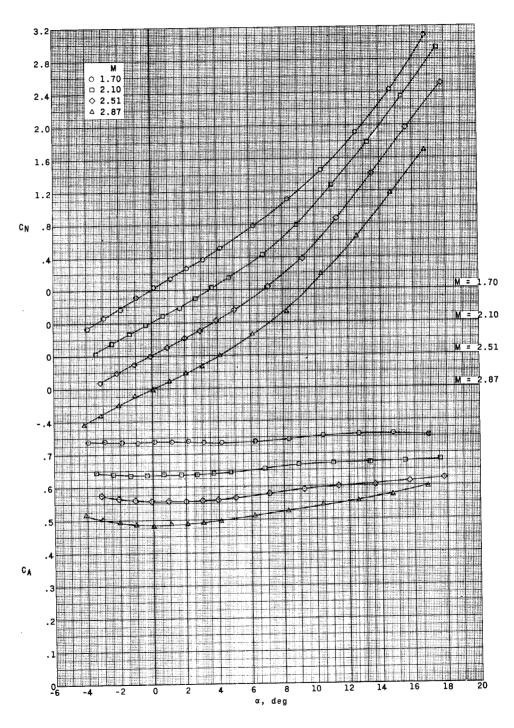
Figure 8.- Continued.



(a) Concluded.

Figure 8.- Continued.

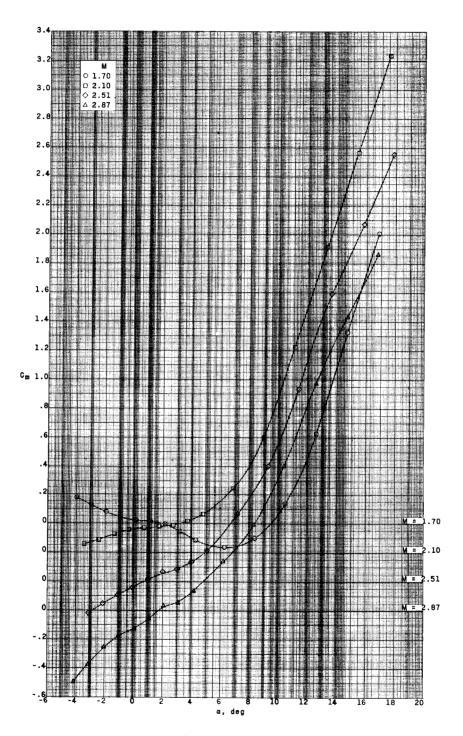
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(b) 4-foot UPWT.

Figure 8.- Continued.





(b) Concluded.

Figure 8. - Concluded.

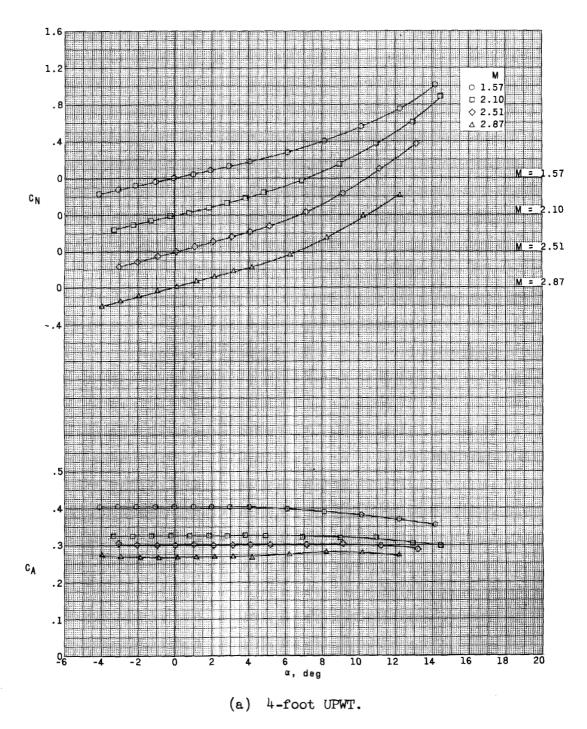
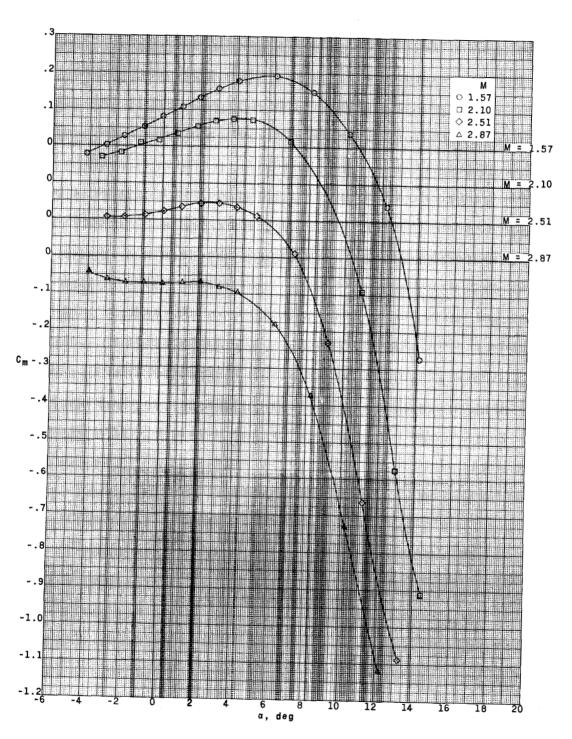


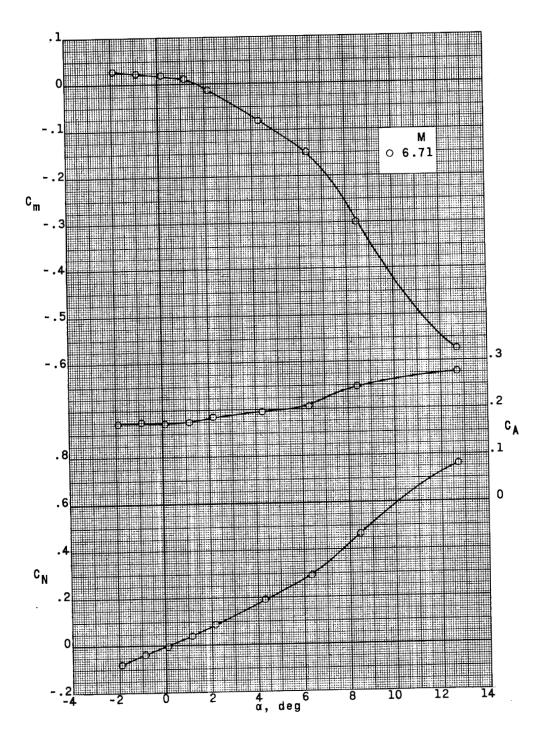
Figure 9.- Aerodynamic characteristics of Jupiter-Mercury configuration.

Moment reference center at station 223.7.



(a) Concluded.

Figure 9.- Continued.



(b) ll-inch HT.

Figure 9.- Concluded.

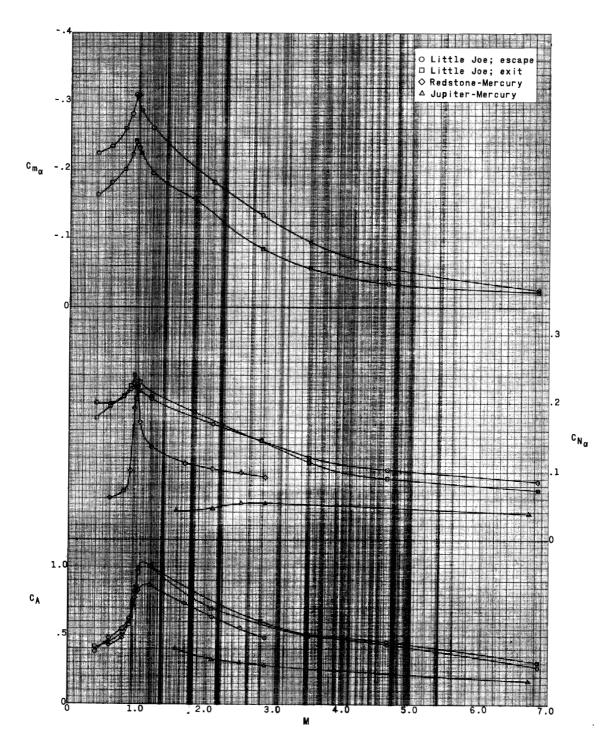


Figure 10.- Summary of longitudinal characteristics; $\alpha \approx 0^{\circ}$. Moments taken about reference centers of figure 2.

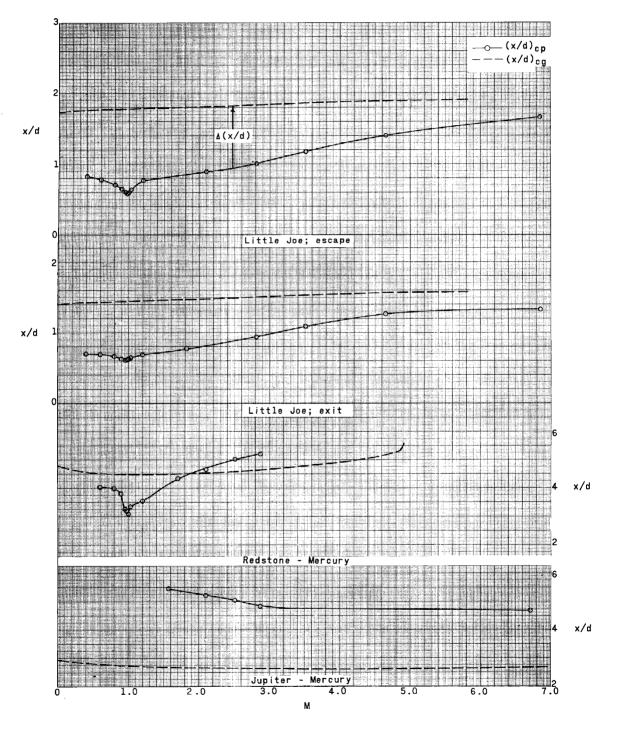


Figure 11.- Summary of effective static margins; $\alpha \approx 0^{\circ}$.